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RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 000883

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/05/2017

TAGS: KNNP MNUC PARM EI

SUBJECT: IRELAND: NIE HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR CONTINUED DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE ON IRAN

REF: STATE 162558

Classified By: DCM Robert Faucher; Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) POLOFF delivered reftel demarche on December 4, 2007 to Michael Gaffey, Director, Middle East and North Africa Division, Department of Foreign Affairs. Gaffey welcomed the NIE acknowledgment that Iran is not an immediate nuclear threat. The report's finding, he said, that pressure from the international community has helped forestall Iranian nuclear weapons development since 2003 validates the EU's insistence on continued diplomatic dialogue with Iran. At the same time, Gaffey said, Ireland, the international community, and especially Iran's close neighbors, continue to lack confidence in Iran and have grounds to remain seriously concerned about Iran's intentions. Gaffey noted Ireland's alarm at Iran's continued intransigence in complying with UNSCRs and its failure to fully cooperate with the IAEA (as reported recently by IAEA Chief Muhammad el-Baradei).

¶2. (C) Gaffey stated that the NIE report should not throw the international community off course, especially now that the usefulness of international pressure has been verified. Firm, decisive, and unified international action on Iran is now needed more than ever, he said. Gaffey noted that the EU has been debating autonomous sanctions against Iran (though, as yet, without conclusions) and that Ireland is hearing that Russia and China are increasingly willing to negotiate a third -- albeit somewhat weak -- UNSCR on Iran. Gaffey anticipated that the EU would wait to see what action is taken by the UNSC before deciding how to proceed -- a decision, he said, that was unlikely before January 2008.

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